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## WILTON

GR<sup>E</sup>AT are the memories that move, and far does the imagination soar, when we speak the name of classic Wilton.

The hand of Holbein in its earlier architecture; Shakespeare acting here with his troupe; kings often within its walls; Ben Jonson and Massinger associated with it; Philip Sidney, walking in the groves as he conceived and wrote "Arcadia;" George Herbert piously meditating in its halls; famous treasures of art by fine judgment and liberal patronage brought here together

—of all these things do we think when we visit Wilton.

And the gardens too, are among the most famous in the land. Classic calm reigns over them; they are the home, we think, of contemplation, in the shadow of the cypress and the yew; they have beauties and varieties such as few gardens can display. In the time of Charles II who "did love Wilton above all places," the house was altered

by a Gascon, Solomon de Caus, and the grounds appear to have been designed by his son, Isaac de Caus, who described and figured them as "Hortus Penbrochianus." One Adrian Gilbert had a great part in the work. Thus does Taylor, the "Water Poet," speak of his achievement: "Amongst the rest,

the pains and industry of an ancient gentleman, Mr. Adrian Gilbert, must not be forgotten; for there hath he (much to my Lord's cost and his own pains) used such a deal of intricate setting, grafting, planting, inoculating, railing,

hedging, plashing, turning, winding, returning, circular, triangular, quadrangular, orbicular, oval and every way curiously and chargeably conceited; there hath he made walks, hedges, and arbours, of all manner of most delicate fruit trees, planting and placing them in such admirable art-like fashions, resembling both divine and moral remembrances, as three arbours standing in a triangle, having each a recourse to



The Italian Garden, Wilton House, Wiltshire

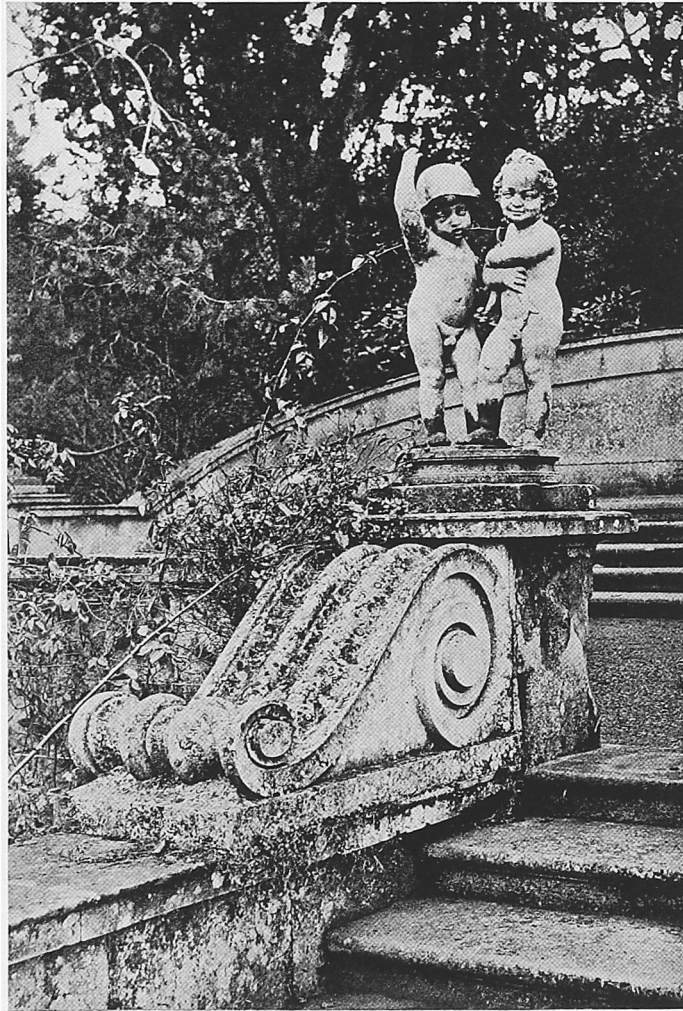
a greater arbour in the midst, resemble three in one and one in three; and he hath there planted certain walks and arbours all with fruit trees, so pleasing and ravishing to the sense, that he calls it 'Paradise' in which he plays the part of a true Adamist, continually toiling and tilling.

"Moreover he hath made his walks most rarely round and spacious, one walk without another (as the rinds of an onion are greatest without, and less towards the center), and withal, the hedges betwixt each walk are so thickly set that one cannot see through from one walk who walks in the other; that, in conclusion, the work seems endless; and I think that in England, it is not to be followed, or in haste will be followed."

Plainly there was at Wilton a rare example of the work of the old garden-fashioner with all its hedged enclosures, its maze, its quaint conceits, and its verdant allegories. Perhaps, there is a timid vein of sarcasm in the Water Poet's description of its extravagance. Evelyn, who visited Wilton in July,

1654, was not, apparently, so much impressed. He describes the garden, "heretofore esteemed the noblest in England," as "a large handsome palin" with a grotto and waterworks, which might have been made more pleasant if the river that passed through had

been cleansed and raised, for all was effected by 'mere force.' "It has a flower garden not inelegant," he says. "But, after all, that which renders the seat delightful is its being so near the downs and noble plains about the country contiguous to it. The stables are well ordered, and yield graceful front, by reason of the walks of lime trees, with the court and fountains of the stables adorned with Cæsar's heads."



Leaden Amorini, Wilton House

Many changes have passed over the gardens at Wilton since those times, and, perhaps, few of the special characters described by Taylor can be found there. We do not now trace the touch of ancient Adrian Gilbert's quaint fancy and curious hand there. Yet old yew trees are in the gardens which probably belong to those early times of

classic Wilton, and lingering, in "the yew Tree's shade," it is pleasant to remember how the cutter and pleacher of trees worked out his picturesque fancies there of yore.

It has always been the happy fortune of Wilton to remain in the hands of those who have valued it. The Her-

there is the charm of water, for the rivers Nadder and Wily—of which one bounds the park and the other separates the pleasure grounds from the kitchen gardens—add grace to the scene. How the opportunity has been seized of throwing a classic character over the place, may be seen in the fine



Fountain in the Italian Garden, Wilton House

bert's have been the patrons and lovers of everything good in art, so that the choicest adornments have been chosen to beautify their home. Judicious planting, the laying out of broad stretches of turf, the addition of architectural features, and of appropriate statuary, and a fine conception of what gardens should be, have contributed to make the surroundings of the house peculiarly satisfactory.

The country tends to be flat, but

Palladian arcaded bridge, designed by Inigo Jones, which was built by Henry, Earl of Pembroke, for the crossing of the Nadder.

Successive hands have, indeed, enriched the surroundings of Wilton with new attractions. The place owes much to the taste and judgment of Catherine, Countess of Pembroke, daughter of Count Woronzow, who died in 1856, and whose noble monument is in that surprisingly beautiful Lombardic

church at Wilton, a vision, as it were, of the Renaissance of Northern Italy, erected by Lord Herbert of Lea, her son.

There are several styles of gardening at Wilton, giving variety and character to the grounds. Near the house, as the reader will anticipate, the features are all Italian. There are gay masses of colour in these beds, with stone edgings and green margins, ranged about the fountain; there is the contrast of rich and glorious foliage; there are the terrace walls and statues of the style, all conceived in the finest taste, without a jarring note to break the classic spell. Then, on the south side, with equal dignity, we find green stretches of lawn, with stone-edged flower-beds at the nearer margin, to set off the stateliness of the splendid pile.

Amid the many aspects of formal

and natural gardening that grace this princely abode, the leading characters will be discerned in the rich greensward and masses of trees which enframe or relieve the rest. One particularly noble feature is the group of ancient cedars of Lebanon, planted about the year 1631, and older even than the monarchs of Warwick and Goodwood. They were, in fact, probably the earliest cedars planted in England; and thus we linger, with pleasant thoughts of those who dowered us with these beautiful trees, beneath their sombre shade. Of course the storms of years have thinned the venerable growth of these monarchs, but others have been planted to bear them company and to maintain the history of the pioneer cedars of Wilton.



Leaden Amorini